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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1824  
INFO RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 001202

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USTR FOR LAURIE ANN AGAMA  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR PLEASE PASS TO WATH  
AMEBASSY ACCRA PLEASE PASS TO WATH  
COMMERCE FOR SALIHA LOUCIF

E.O. 12598: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: GUINEA COOPERATIVE PLANTATION EYES AGOA BENEFITS

REF: CONAKRY 01156

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. On October 16, a representative of the West African Trade Hub in Dakar, Marlene Gummo, gave a presentation at the AGOA Day held in Conakry. The next day, she toured a fruit and vegetable plantation in the Kindia region of Guinea. The plantation is literally 'growing', and hopes to be able to take advantage of the provisions of AGOA for export to the U.S. END SUMMARY.

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Co-op Plantation in Kindia  
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¶2. (U) On October 17, Marlene Gummo of the West African Trade Hub in Dakar, along with Embassy staff visited a cooperative plantation in Dantouman, Kindia. Hosted by the co-op director, Ms. Sylla M'Balou Fofana, the visit illustrated the region's importance as one of Guinea's key agricultural areas, which is known for its fruits and vegetables, especially bananas, pineapples, and papayas. Prior to the plantation visit, Ms. Sylla participated in the October 16 Conakry AGOA Day where she also organized an exhibition displaying a wide variety of products, including produce and local fabrics.

¶3. (U) Following a warm reception by Ms. Sylla and members of her cooperative, Ms. Gummo toured the plantation, which was established in 2000 near the ruins of a French colonial banana plantation that is being rehabilitated. While the plantation has ten hectares, only 5 hectares are currently cultivated: three hectares of bananas and two hectares of pineapples. Other seasonal crops such as rice, beans, peppers, corn, and peanuts are grown as well, but on an informal basis. Fifty-five local villagers work on the plantations on a part-time basis. These workers receive a significant portion of their livelihood from these plantations and divide their time between the plantation and their own family plots.

¶4. (U) The Government of Guinea agricultural research center in Foulayah, Kindia provides technical assistance, seedlings and training to the Co-op. Chemical fertilizers are used, but no pesticides. Ms. Sylla said that experimentation with organic methods will begin in 2008.

¶5. (U) Currently, the plantation's products are only sold domestically. However, in order to take advantage of AGOA, production is increasing and Ms. Sylla said the target is to start exporting bananas and pineapples by 2012. Financially self-sufficient, the cooperative does not have any loan liabilities. According to Ms. Sylla, they plan to set up a micro-finance framework to support its members.

¶6. (U) Prime Minister Kouyate visited the Co-op plantation this year and promised to improve access to the area. The road needs serious repairs while colonial-era bridges need to be replaced in order to

allow trucks to collect produce at harvest. Currently, trucks are unable to access the plantation during the rainy season, which lasts from June through October.

17. (U) At the end of the visit, Ms. Sylla expressed interest in getting training on U.S. sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) norms in order to better prepare her products for the US market. She also requested training on techniques to grow bio and organic products and to have contacts of US agencies for a 'fruitful' collaboration.

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Social Responsibility  
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18. (U) The Co-op assists farmers in educating their children, especially young girls, and also provides adult education. It holds sensitization sessions on other issues such as environmental protection and health.

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SATELITE AGOA NETWORK  
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19. (U) COMMENT. After attending an AGOA Day in Kindia last month, Ms. Sylla was instrumental in organizing the local satellite AGOA Network and currently is the local coordinator. This dynamic female entrepreneur is adding new vigor into the National AGOA Network, as demonstrated by the quality and quantity of products she exhibited in the recent Conakry AGOA Day. While her current operation is small, she is the head of the local 150 person strong AGOA Network in the Kindia area, all of whom are hoping to emulate her efforts. The benefits provided by AGOA have inspired this region to upgrade their operations, and products with the aim of exporting to the U.S.

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END COMMENT.

CARTER